

Minutes of the Little Compton School Building Committee

September 30, 2009

I. Call to Order: The inaugural meeting of the Little Compton School Building Committee was called to order by M. Harrington at 6:35 p.m. in the Wilbur/McMahon School Commons. A quorum was present.

Members Present: T. Arkins, B. Borden, H. Devine, B. Gauthier, J. Gibney, P. Golembeske (alternate), D. Gomez, M. Harrington, D. MacGregor, M. Manning, R. Mushen, C. Osborne, BG Shanklin, M. Shapiro, J. Talbot, M. Rapp, and D. Wordell

Others Present: Consultant G. Smolley of JCJ Architecture, Town Building Inspector M. Mello, and members of the public

Members Absent: T. Alder, L. Brousseau-Lebreaux, D. Freeman, R. Racette

II. Approval of Minutes: None

III. Election of Officers: There was a preliminary discussion of the formative leadership structure of Committee. D. Gomez noted that the Facilities Committee worked well with co-chairs. G. Smolley

confirmed that state does not require any particular hierarchy. The Superintendent spoke from his experience on five previous building committees and said the best structure was whatever this Committee is comfortable with. Several members expressed support for a single chairperson with vice chairs of subcommittees. M. Harrington asked for this item to be tabled. In the meantime, those members interested in serving in a leadership position were directed to contact the Superintendent.

On a motion made by P. Golembeske and seconded by M. Harrington, it was voted to table this item until the next meeting.

At this point in the meeting, a member of the audience interjected and identified himself as Kevin Healey, of Pleasant View Drive. He read a statement for the record as pertains to the Open Meetings Law and which is appended to these minutes as Addendum A.

The Superintendent acknowledged that he was aware of K. Healey's position prior to this meeting and had consulted with the School Department attorney for a legal opinion on the matter. According to the Superintendent, the School Department attorney confirmed that this meeting was in fact properly posted and explained that School Committee members are serving herein as members of the Building Committee, not in their capacity as members of the School Committee.

There was further discussion of the relationship of the Building Committee to the School Committee. It was stated that Building Committee is established under state law and does not report to the School Committee, nor does the School Committee direct the Building Committee.

IV. Guided Tour of the Building: G. Smolley introduced himself and the role of the Building Committee. A tour of the interior of the school building followed. Signature life-safety concerns and code violations were identified in the original 1929 building, the 1950s addition, the 1970s addition/renovation, and the 1990s addition/renovation.

V. History of Project: G. Smolley overviewed the 2008 Masterplan and presented several display boards highlighting site conditions, site analysis, and site options. He debuted a conceptual rendering of a new school building west of the present site and noted that an option such as this would shorten construction time, eliminate the need for temporary classrooms, and allow the historic structure to stay in use for another purpose. A copy of this new conceptual rendering is appended to these Minutes as Addendum B. Discussion followed as to research of on-site acreage and restrictions.

A member of the audience questioned whether the Facilities Committee had specifically recommended building on the site west of the present school. G. Smolley clarified that the recommendation of the Facilities Committee was to replace the building somewhere in

the vicinity of the Commons.

There was an update on the status of the project with regard to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). The Superintendent informed the Committee that a letter of intent has been submitted to RIDE. The School Committee will be reviewing the Stage I application at its October 14th meeting. Upon approval, the Stage I application will be submitted to RIDE. P. Golembeske suggested that this Committee may want to vote to accept the Stage I application as a reference at that point. Subject to RIDE approval of the Stage I application, the process then proceeds to Stage II, at which point the Building Committee takes over responsibility. The timeframe for Stage II is estimated to be one year. Once the project is approved by the Board of Regents, the reimbursement proposal goes to the legislature for a vote, and then to the town for a bond referendum.

There was discussion of the nature of state aid for construction. T. Arkins questioned whether the Committee ought to consider the cost to build without state reimbursement. P. Golembeske echoed this and suggested that seeking state aid may cost more due to the imposition of additional requirements. He questioned whether RIDE money is guaranteed, and stated that all options ought to be on the table. Discussion followed. G. Smolley indicated this is a favorable time to move forward with a request for reimbursement since according to RIDE there is little competition for grants right now.

VI. Next Steps: New members expressed the need for further discussion of the work of the Facilities Committee in order to get up-to-speed. It was suggested that all resources and reports will eventually be on-line. G. Smolley will bring digital files of the Masterplan, which includes the Mt. Vernon Report, to distribute at the next meeting. It was suggested that D. Gomez give the summary presentation he made previously to the School Committee. G. Smolley will make recommendations on subcommittees. The Superintendent noted that October 7th is the date that the report of the Independent Estimate of the Mt. Vernon Report is due to be received.

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, October 7th at 7:00 p.m. Notification will be posted on the Secretary of State website, the school website, and the school list-serve.

Respectfully submitted by M. Manning, Secretary pro tem